

## Section VII.

### Private Land in Washington County:

#### Introduction:

Washington County contains an "island" of private land surrounded by public land. Of the 1,555,021.31 acres of land in the county, only 246,640.31 acres, or 16.5 % of the land is privately owned, and the balance is under jurisdiction of one of the public land agencies. This is the reason that the General Plan contains an extensive section dealing with the public lands. A person cannot go far in this county without being on the public lands of one jurisdiction or another.

Table I. shows the relationship between the land within the cities and towns and the unincorporated land in the county in terms of acres in each area, and the percentage of the limited land in each category. It should be noted that 24% of the private land in the county is located in the Kolob area which is currently only available for seasonal use.

Table I

<b>Private Land</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Of Total Area</b>	<b>% of Total Private</b>
Total Private	249,884	16%	100%
Incorporated Private	96,986	6%	39%
Unincorporated Private	152,896	10%	61%
Kolob Private	59,003	4%	24%
<b>Total land in county</b>	<b>1,555,021</b>		

Washington County is not an "urban service" county. That is, along with all counties in Utah except for Salt Lake County, Washington County does not provide urban services including water, power, sewer, etc., to development in the same fashion as an incorporated city does. For this reason, Washington County has historically encouraged development to take place within city boundaries wherever possible. For this reason, it is possible to drive from Springdale on the east to Ivins on the west with only about two miles of the distance between Rockville and Virgin being in the unincorporated area. The rest is in one or another incorporated city.

Each incorporated city or town is responsible for its own planning and development. The county has no planning authority over these cities and towns. The areas that are included in the General Plan of Washington County are those areas of the county that are not close enough to a city to have been incorporated and are still under the jurisdiction of the county. Some of these areas have considered incorporation at various times in the past, but have presently chosen to remain unincorporated. Some areas of the county may yet choose to incorporate in the future.

#### General Public Service Information:

While Washington County itself does not provide public services to the unincorporated areas of the county, most of these areas do have access to public services. These services are generally provided by other public or private entities that provide services to the unincorporated areas of the county.

Following is a list of the public services that are provided to all or part of the unincorporated areas of the county. They are listed by the service provided.

#### Water Development:

Historically, most developed areas in the unincorporated part of the county have been located where water was accessible. Where water was not available, some areas have been primarily used for grazing or dry farming.

"Dry" subdivisions have not been approved in the county for the past 40 years. The saying went, "If you have water, you may develop. If you don't, you graze livestock." That saying relative to subdivision development is, if anything, more correct now than at any other time in the last forty years.

Water development in subdivisions has historically taken one of two forms. In some cases the land developer has created a developer-owned water company to provide water for each lot in the subdivision. The other often-used option is for the developer to create a water company and to deed shares of ownership to the owners of each lot in the subdivision. This method is referred to as a mutual water company wherein the land owners also become the owners of the water company. The county, the State Department of Environmental Quality and the Southwest Utah Public Health Department have jointly set the minimum quantity of water required to be supplied for each lot, and require that developments meet state standards for water quality.

Most of the currently developed culinary water in the unincorporated areas of the county comes from springs and wells. The highest quality of water in the county comes from the geologic formation called "Navajo Sandstone." This formation covers much of the central part of the county. There are a number of communities developed over the Navajo formation. This creates a potential for contamination of the ground water source. Once contaminated, it may take years or be impossible to remove the contamination. It would be much better to do whatever is necessary to prevent contamination in the first place. The General Plan recommends that wherever development exists or is proposed to take place above the Navajo Sandstone formation, all such developments be connected to one type of sewage disposal or another, as opposed to the continued use of septic tanks which are in use in most of the county. There are already some areas of the county where development is in place that has the potential for ground water contamination.

The above methods of water development and protection have worked reasonably well, except for the problems of inadequate supply in dry years or inadequate storage capacity to insure sufficient water in the subdivision. Sometimes a broken pump or pipeline

leaves the water company or water provider without water in the subdivision until the problem is corrected.

The General Plan visualizes a time in the future when all water companies in the county and those in the cities and towns will be connected together. When one area runs short of water, water could then come to the system from another source by turning on a valve. When the system is up and running again, the valve is closed and the system again relies on its own water. Some steps toward this end have already begun to take place. More is needed county-wide.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District is a political subdivision of the State of Utah organized and existing under the Utah Water Conservancy District Act. The Water District was established in 1962 in response to a petition signed by the property owners of Washington County. The Water District is charged with conserving, developing, managing and stabilizing water supplies within the county. In accordance with state law, the seven members of the District's Board of Trustees are appointed to four-year staggered terms by the Washington County Commission. The openings are announced by legal notices and applicants are evaluated by the commissioners. The County has traditionally selected board members so that they represent all areas of the county.

The Water District provides water to over 85% of the people of the County. Most of the people served with District water supplies are residents of Municipal customers of the District. During peak summer months, the Water District delivers over 34 million gallons a day to its customers. While the municipalities continue to manage their water delivery systems, they obtain additional water from the District as needed.

The Water District is a "special purpose" district, in large part because the business of water is complicated. Particularly in the West, laws, rules, history, traditions and the complex facts of hydrologic cycles in desert river systems create layer upon layer of interacting factors. This specialty is one that many may know a little bit about, but few know a lot about. The Water District employs a manager to oversee its activities. The staff is hired and supervised in-house, not as county employees. The decisions that govern the amount, location and type of growth that generates the demand which the Water District must meet are delegated to elected officials of the municipalities and the county. The election process, the constitutional mechanism by which government obtains the "consent of the governed," ensures that these officials are responsive to the desires of those who elect them. This way, there is a rational division of duties between an appointed board that carries special expertise necessary to address the complex issues involved with water delivery and the elected representatives of the people who make the decisions that determine the water demand.

The Water District is funded in part through property taxes. These county-wide taxes are allocated to the Water District based upon the recognition of the broad public purposes for which water conservancy districts were created, in particular the control and conservation of water that benefits the community as a whole. Without water, there is no

economy. Moreover, the economic benefits of water supply in the urbanized areas of the county are spread throughout the county. The broadly-distributed benefits provided by the Water District include managing the water supply of the Virgin Basin so as to maximize its availability to legitimate users, water conservation programs that are necessary to ensure project approvals, watershed and water quality protection, water rights settlements that have avoided widespread conflict and addressing the demands of federal laws and regulations that would otherwise be imposed upon individual water systems such as the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. The Water District has responded to requests for help throughout the county from Enterprise to Rockville. The Water District seeks to provide the greatest service possible to those who pay taxes to the Water District, particularly where they are not receiving direct delivery of water from Water District projects, whether through consultation on water issues and projects or through grants and other partnerships. Payment of property taxes throughout the county distributes a portion of the costs to those who will receive services and benefits in the future, rather than forcing current users to fund programs designed to benefit future users.

In addition, the Water District receives impact fees for water resources made available to its municipal customers under the Regional Water Supply Agreement (RWSA), first executed in 2006. The cities of Ivins, Santa Clara, St. George, Washington, Hurricane, LaVerkin, Toquerville and Leeds have all joined the RWSA. The town of Virgin is served by a separate contract and the Water District also has a contract with Apple Valley to provide certain services. Other income to the Water District is derived from charges for water delivered to retail and wholesale customers and from hydropower revenue.

Communities may petition the Water District to obtain supplemental water supplies to serve additional demand. The Water District's response will depend on practical considerations such as whether there are additional water rights and developable resources that could be economically developed to serve anticipated demand. The arrangements are generally memorialized through contracts with water suppliers. The intent of the Water District is not to take over private or mutual water companies. Rather, it is in a position to provide supplementary water to these companies when needed and requested. Water District policy opposes takeovers of local water companies in any area of the county. However, the General Plan recognizes that sound public policy would support that water service to new development in the county be provided by the Water District.

Since 1995, the Water District has strongly promoted water conservation throughout the county. In addition, the Water District has developed facilities necessary to supply the water to serve the population that has grown at an average rate of 6% since 1962. A number of important water projects were constructed and are maintained by the Water District. Today the Water District operates facilities from Kolob to Gunlock, including the Quail Creek Reservoir, Sand Hollow Reservoir, the Quail Creek Water Treatment Plant, a number of wells throughout the county, a number of transmission pipelines for culinary and for irrigation water and two hydropower plants and related infrastructure. Other projects are planned to be constructed in the near future to be able to continue

efficient water resource management, including the Ash Creek Project that will involve construction of a new reservoir near Anderson Junction and the Warner Valley Reservoir Project. The General Plan is supportive of these efforts to provide for the water needs of county residents. The construction of reservoirs and wells at strategic locations in the county also helps to improve the underground water supply.

One project in which the Water District has been involved in planning for many years is the transfer of water from the state of Utah's Colorado River water allocation to Washington County, through the Lake Powell Pipeline Project. The Project is a state project, pursuant to the Lake Powell Pipeline Development Act, passed in 2006. This state support is consistent with many projects in northern Utah that have brought water to the Wasatch front areas of the state that have been very successful.

Under the Colorado River Compact, Utah's allocation from the Colorado River is approximately 1.4 million acre feet (maf), with about 400 maf that has not yet been depleted by active diversions. There are limited opportunities to divert water from the Colorado River below the Uintah Basin so that currently, Utah's undiverted water rights are flowing down river. The construction of the Lake Powell Pipeline will provide diversification of water supply to this county to ensure an adequate water supply in the face of recurrent droughts that may be exacerbated by climate change. The average annual flow into Lake Powell is about 12 maf, whereas the average annual flow of the Virgin River is about 130,000 af. However, for human use, you should only rely on the water that is there at least 90% of the time, which is about 4.5 maf in Lake Powell vs. about 77,000 af in the Virgin River. A supply of 69,000 acre feet from a total reliable supply of 4.5 maf acre feet (about 1.5%) will be more reliable than a supply of 39,000 acre feet from a total reliable supply of 77,000 af (about 50%). When the Virgin River is in drought, there will still be water available from the Colorado River in Lake Powell. The Lake Powell Pipeline will provide for the inevitable demands created by future growth and will help to ensure that the now existing communities in the county will not run out of water. The General Plan strongly supports the development of this additional water system.

The Lake Powell Pipeline has been opposed by some groups in the county. They object to funding a project that could encumber future generations with repayment of the loan to construct the line. It is true that the people of Washington County will have to pay for the Lake Powell Pipeline Project, but that repayment is anticipated to take place over 50 or more years and should be funded almost entirely by new growth. On the other hand, if there is no additional water, water supplies will be less reliable, our children and grandchildren will not be able to build homes here and the economy will suffer. No one will have to pay for additional water because there will be no additional water once we have used up our existing supply. Isn't it possible that the opposition to the Lake Powell Pipeline is really opposition to any future growth and development in Washington County?

[Liquid Waste Disposal:](#)

There is only one sewage system presently in use in Washington County. This system is located in the Pinion Hills subdivision in Dammeron Valley. This system is in need of improvement to complete development of the Pinion Hills project.

Currently the wastewater treatment method of necessity in most of the county is septic tanks. Some years ago the county prepared a plan, with the assistance of the State and other public agencies, to examine the ground water systems in the county to try to determine the holding capacity of existing basins where development has taken place. A table was prepared showing how many additional septic tanks could be approved in each area before the water table might be compromised. Several areas are close to capacity, or could be over their capacity if a home was built on each subdivision lot that has been approved. This limits development in the county to large, single family lots which does not fit with the need for work force housing in the unincorporated area of the county. The primary work force housing type in the county is the use of modular housing units which the county will approve in all subdivisions.

By working with the Department of Environmental Quality, the county was able to convince the State to explore alternative methods of waste disposal. The result of this effort was the approval of a number of "on site treatment plants" to process effluent as opposed to the use of septic tanks. This could allow a mixture of development types being able to process the effluent through one of the alternative methods now approved for developers to use.

The county does not encourage sewer systems for new developments in the county, and in fact does not necessarily encourage developments in the unincorporated areas, However, where it is possible to provide the necessary facilities, the county does not oppose such development.

In 2009, the county entered into agreements with the Ash Creek Special Service District and the Water District establishing responsibility to manage wastewater services throughout the county. Ash Creek SSD is responsible for the eastern part of the county essentially lying east of Interstate 15 freeway and in the New Harmony valley west of the freeway. The balance of the county (including the Kolob area east of the freeway) is the responsibility of the Water District. These agencies may authorize other alternative treatment systems to be used in addition to septic tanks as development continues in the unincorporated county. The Water District is currently working on a plan to provide a sewer outfall line from Dammeron Valley to connect to the St. George City Reuse Treatment Plant that may also serve areas in between over time. The General Plan of the county is in support of these service agreements for effluent disposal.

#### Electrical Power:

The majority of the unincorporated area of the county is served by the Rocky Mountain Power Company. Some areas of the county are served by the Dixie Escalante Rural Electric Company. Many of the incorporated cities have power companies owned by the city or town, and most of the companies are associated with the Utah Associated

Municipal Power Service which is essentially a wholesale provider of electricity in many parts of the state.

The General Plan of the county has attempted to identify all current and future utility corridors in the county. The power companies and the wholesale providers work well together to provide for current and future electrical needs in the county. Washington County does not provide electrical services to individual developments even though power is required by the county subdivision ordinance. The county does take responsibility to see that corridors are provided across the public lands to make sure that current and future needs will be provided for in the county. The county does show utility routes on the transportation plan of the county and reflects new routes that the county was aware of when that plan was prepared and adopted.

The Kolob area is the one area of the county where electrical service has not been provided up to this time. The General Plan would support any electrical company that would make an effort to bring power to this area.

Rocky Mountain Power has recently expanded the capacity of the sub-station in the Central area of the county and is in the process of bringing an addition main line to this sub-station from the facility in Sigurd, Utah. The completion of this transmission line should be adequate to provide for the power needs in the county for many years to come.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District expects to operate additional hydropower plants in conjunction with the Lake Powell Pipeline Project.

#### Solid Waste:

Historically, each community in the county maintained a "garbage dump" near their community. These "open dumps" were very unsanitary and the wind blew paper materials far and wide.

The county was able to obtain land from the Bureau of Land Management which is located south-east of the City of Washington where a solid waste facility has been established to serve the entire county. All of the local facilities have been closed, and all solid waste is transported to the solid waste site. The county maintains a contract with a contractor to provide waste pickup throughout the county.

The Solid Waste District is managed by a Board consisting of one member from each of the incorporated cities and towns, and one member from the county commission. There are satellite collection sites that have been established in parts of the county to save residents the need to drive to the landfill for small loads of refuse. Each city and town does their own billing for service, and the solid waste district bills for the unincorporated areas. Compared to the open dump facilities from past years, and with the reduction in refuse being dumped throughout the county in unauthorized locations, most of these sites have been cleaned up. One can only conclude that the system is working very well. The

county is much cleaner, residents appear to be well educated as to how to use the system, and the management of the landfill is filling the need for which it was created.

### Roads:

The county has spent a significant amount of time preparing a transportation plan for the county. This plan includes major arterial roads, collector roads, and special use roads. These plans do not show all of the county roads. For example, the plan does not include all roads within individual subdivisions, even though these roads have been dedicated to the county. Roads inside of the subdivision are included in the plan of class "B" roads which are the roads for which the county receives funding from state and federal sources for maintenance.

The roads in the county are discussed in more detail in the public lands sections of the General Plan, particularly Section III dealing with the public lands under the public roads on BLM and National Forest lands. The General Plan refers readers to this section for more information as to how these roads are maintained and how the maintenance is funded through the gasoline tax. The road system is very important to all county residents whether in the unincorporated or incorporated parts of the county.

Most county roads, except for those in a recorded subdivision, are called county roads "by right of use." They were not dedicated by formal recorded documents, but the use by the public constitutes a public road dedication under state law. Many of these roads have been used for generations of time. These roads on federal public land were provided to the county by Congressional action in 1866. These roads are identified as R.S.2477 roads after the statute that created them. In recent years, environmental groups have challenged the right of the county to manage public access to these legally-dedicated roads. That right of use is supported by the General Plan at a significant cost of time and resources by the county.

### Police Protection:

Police protection in the county is provided by the Washington County Sheriff's Office. The County Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer in the county. In the past, some of the incorporated cities have contracted with the county to provide law enforcement services inside city limits. If a city or town does not have its own law enforcement agency, the county is required under state law to provide law enforcement to that city or town.

In unincorporated areas, some of the developments, through their special service districts, or other organizations, have contracted with the county for "enhanced" police services to their area. Such contracts allow the county to bring additional law enforcement capability that otherwise would not exist due to limited resources. The general Plan supports this proposal. The county will continue to provide the services required by law.



### Fire Protection:

Some years ago the county created fire districts to cover all parts of the unincorporated portion of Washington County. Table II shows each of the fire districts serving the unincorporated areas of the county, and the communities and areas that are covered by each district.

**Table II**  
**Fire Districts and communities and Areas Covered by each District**

<u>Fire District</u>	<u>Community / Areas Covered</u>
Hurricane Valley Fire	Anderson Junction Cliff Dwellers/Sky Ranch/Hurricane Estates Harrisburg Junction Hurricane Valley Kolob area LaVerkin Toquerville Virgin
Leeds	Leeds Pintura Silver Valley Estates
New Harmony	Harmony Valley New Harmony
Northwestern	Brookside Central/Dixie Deer Gunlock Mountain Meadows Veyo
North Central Fire	Enterprise Valley
Pine Valley	Pine Valley
Southwestern	Diamond Valley Winchester Hills
Dammeron Valley	Dammeron Valley
Other Areas	Motoqua Pinto

The system of fire districts has resulted in fire departments with suppression facilities being located throughout the county. An association of fire chiefs from each area of the county, including the incorporated cities and towns, meets monthly to discuss the needs of the county. Cooperation between agencies is at a high level. When any jurisdiction needs additional assistance with fire suppression, other departments are available to provide assistance through mutual aid agreements between fire departments.

The county works with the cities along with state and federal agencies to provide fire suppression on the public lands. Generally the interagency coordination has been very good. However, as described elsewhere in the General Plan, the county does not support current federal policy that promotes managed natural fires and prescribed burning when private lands and properties are placed at risk, and where heavy smoke is created over long periods of time to the detriment of air quality and public health and safety down slope and downwind of the fires. Private Citizens and businesses have suffered because of federal actions in this area. The General Plan recommends a more enlightened policy of fire management activities regarding when, where, and for how long such fire management practices should be permitted. The General Plan does support continued federal and state cooperation in implementing sound strategies for reducing wild-land fire risk around rural communities and in helping communities on the wildland-urban interface to understand and develop defensible space around valuable, private and municipal property.

The county works with each of the districts in the wildland areas that have community fire councils, consisting of residents from the community with fire department personnel as members of the council. These councils have been working on specific fire plans for their respective fire district. Table III shows the Fire District, the fire rating, and the degree of completion of the CWPP. There are other categories of completion which are CWPP's that are 1) completed, submitted to the State, and approved, 2) completed and not yet submitted to the State, and 3) still being completed. A mixed fire rating is an indication of which areas have accessible fire hydrants, (lowest rating) and with areas having no hydrants available (highest rating). Fire ratings are provided by the Federal Government.

**Table III**  
**Community Wildlife Protection Plans**  
**(CWPP's)**

<u>Completed and Approved</u>	<u>Fire Rating</u>
Central/Dixie Deer	6/9
New Harmony/Harmony Valley	6/9
Veyo	6
<u>Completed, not yet submitted to the State:</u>	
Dammeron Valley	4
Gunlock	10
Leeds / I-15	5/9
Pine Valley	5
Pinto	10
Winchester Hills	5
<u>Still Being Completed</u>	
Diamond Valley	9
Enterprise/East Enterprise	6
Kolob area	10

Most of the Districts covered by the CWP Plans also include service to large areas lying outside of their immediate area. For example, the Leeds community has fire hydrants, but the I-15 Corridor where Leeds is the primary provider, does not. Diamond Valley serves a large area outside of the consolidated community. Gunlock is also responsible for the Gunlock Reservoir area, and much undeveloped land surrounding Gunlock. Fortunately for county residents, many fire units will respond to calls outside of their normal area. Sometimes units from two or three areas will respond to a single fire.

#### Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Each of the areas listed above, except for Motoqua, have fire plans that have been approved by the State, or they are working on completing such a plan. These plans are very comprehensive in nature, and once completed, give the fire departments and fire personnel very detailed information about the area that they serve. The General Plan does not include any specific plan herein. Most of the plans follow a similar format, but the internal details are specific to the plan in which they are found. Following is an outline of a typical CWPP, the details of which are specific to the plan in the area that the plan serves.

#### **Table IV Typical CWPP Outline**

##### **Table of Contents:**

##### **Fire Planning Checklist:**

##### **Introduction:**

- Objectives of the community plan
- Statement of Liability
- Partners and Collaboration
- Acknowledgements

##### **Part I Community Description:**

- Declaration and Concurrence
- Planning Committee Member List/Contacts
- Community Legal Structure
- Population
- Estimated Values at Risk
- Natural Resources at Risk
- Commercial Entities
- Utilities
- Formal Associations
- Median Support
- Schools
- Transportation
- Private Emergency Services and Equipment
- Restrictive Covenants, Ordinances, Etc.

Insurance Rating  
Physical Description  
    Ownership  
    Access  
    Roads  
    Driveways  
    Structures  
    Bridges, Culverts, and Gates  
    Utilities  
    Sewage Systems

**Part II Community Description:**

Goals and Purpose of Plan  
Identification of Actions, responsible parties, resources  
and priorities

**Part III Resources:**

Information Material  
Community Planning/Contact Information  
Websites: General  
Websites: Agency  
Websites: Fire Ecology, Education  
Websites: Utah  
Grants  
Contracting Opportunities  
Employment Opportunities  
Emergency Services/Equipment Projects  
Hazard Evaluation  
Area Fire Safety  
Subdivision Fire Safety  
Property Structure Rating  
Expected Fire Behavior  
Completed Fuel Modification Projects  
Community Prescription  
Fuel Modification Project Recommendations  
Infrastructure Improvement Project  
Recommendations  
Education Recommendations  
Wildfire Response/Pre-Attach Plan  
Monitoring and Evaluation  
Evacuation Plan

**Part V Appendix:**

There has been an extreme amount of work that has gone into the preparation and maintenance of each of these plans. The General Plan recommends that residents of any of these areas review the plan for your specific area and you will gain an appreciation for the time and effort that has gone into this project.

The General Plan would further recommend that these plans be kept up to date and used in the training of fire personnel. The information that each of these plans contain is difficult to describe because of the extensive detail that each one contains. These plans provide great value to the residents of the county in terms of fire protection. Washington County is well served by the fire protection systems that are established and are in effect in this county.

#### Telephone and Cell Phone Service:

The major provider of telephone service in Washington County is the Century Link telephone system. Telephone service is available to most of the "occupied" area of Washington County. In recent years cell phones have become popular and almost a necessity for most people. There are cell phone towers in many of the cities and towns in the county as well as in the unincorporated areas. While there are still some "dead" spots in the county where service is not available, most of the areas where residents reside now have access to one kind of telephone service or another. The General Plan supports continued improvements to the telephone communication system in the county

#### Internet Service:

Most residents of the county now use computer systems and other specialized forms of electronic devices for a variety of purposes, and the need for good internet services continues to grow. More recently, internet providers are working to provide what is referred to as "high speed" internet. Technology continues to improve and services continue to get better and less expensive. Service areas need to be expanded where possible. The residents of the county are the beneficiaries of these improvements without the county itself having any need to be directly involved in providing the service. The benefits in these areas that residents now enjoy are the result of private enterprise at work and represent one more reason that the county has avoided becoming an urban service provider.

#### Schools:

Washington County contains one of the largest school districts in the state. It is a county-wide district. The school district is completely separate from county government. There are five school board members elected from five geographical districts in the county. These district boundaries are required to be adjusted every ten years based upon the "one man, one vote" requirement. Generally speaking, four of the five board members represent the Ivins, Santa Clara, St. George, and Washington areas because of this being the center of the population in the county. One member essentially represents the balance of the county.

Historically, the school district has been able to obtain public lands, mostly BLM land, as construction sites for new school buildings through the Recreation and Public Purposes act of the Federal Government in which the land is granted to the district on a lease basis and then is purchased by the district when the project is completed. Because there are

much fewer scattered BLM parcels available for selection by the district at this point in time, the school district will find it necessary in the future to acquire sites from other sources.

Washington County collects property taxes for the school district as well as for all of the cities and towns, special service districts, the Water District, and all other taxing districts in the county. Those taxes are distributed to the various taxing entities by the county, but the county is not responsible for the tax levies set by these taxing authorities. In fact, the General Fund property tax of Washington County is the lowest of all of the twenty-nine counties in the State.

### Parks and Recreation:

Because of the decision of the county not to get involved in providing urban services to subdivision developments in the county, the county does not have a parks and recreation department as do most of the cities and towns. The county has generally found that with all of the unincorporated vacant land in the county, sufficient recreation benefits exist for the residents without the county being involved in urban-type recreation programs.

Some years ago the county did acquire land in what is historically known as the "Purgatory" area. The area was named because the land was so poor that the early settlers couldn't grow anything on the land, nor did it provide sufficient feed for livestock. The county was able to acquire buildings, stables, arenas, bleachers, race track fencing, and other recreational amenities and located them on this site. The cost to the county was less than half of what new materials would cost. The official name for the site is the Washington County Regional Park and Equestrian Center. It supports many different uses and receives funding for its upkeep and maintenance from the county restaurant tax. The county acquired the property from the BLM at a very low rate, about \$400.00 per acre, and recently acquired an additional 80 acres through the Washington County Land Bill to be used for future expansion of the correctional facility.

Adjacent to the Regional Park is another parcel of property obtained from the BLM under an R& PP lease as was the Regional Park and the Correctional Facility. It has been developed as a regional sports shooting park for rifle, handgun, shotgun and bow and arrow. The management and development of this facility is moving along well, and when it is completed, this site may also be purchased by the county.

These two facilities represent the county's total involvement in recreation development. There are no plans on the part of the county to expand into other areas or other types of recreation.

### Flood Plains and River Bottoms:

Washington County has developed and adopted a flood control ordinance for the county. This ordinance prohibits any urban development in identified flood channels or washes. Working with the federal agency, the county has been able to update most of the flood

control maps for the county which identifies flood plains, floodways, and washes where floods may be a problem. All development is weighed against the flood control ordinance prior to the approval of any new development.

The Water District, along with other local agencies, has sponsored master plans for the Virgin and Santa Clara rivers.

The General Plan recommends that flood prone areas be retained in an open space classification to protect them from the effects of urbanization and to prevent needless flooding impacts on developed property.

#### Air Travel:

There are several airports located in the county. Some are privately owned, and a few are publicly owned facilities. St. George City completed the construction of a new municipal airport in the south-east part of the city. This facility has allowed the current airport, located in the center part of town to be eliminated, and to allow compatible urban uses to take place over time on the ground.

The new airport provides longer runways which allows for larger planes to land and take off. The airport is expected to encourage more commercial, business or industrial development that depends upon air travel and services. The General Plan supports the efforts of the City of St. George to construct the airport and the supporting facilities surrounding it for the benefits it will bring to the county, but even more important, for the additional safety that it will bring to those coming to and from the area. Many dangers existed at the old airport that has been eliminated with the new facility.

#### Agricultural Development:

Agriculture has long played an important role in the custom, culture, and economy of the county. Its future maintenance and development is supported by the General Plan. Agricultural land is identified as areas where land is being used for irrigated pasture land, and for the growing of crops or orchards, either irrigated or dry. While equally important, this classification does not specifically designate the large areas of the county where livestock grazing takes place. The agricultural land in the county has been reduced over the years as urban development has expanded into agricultural areas. One example of this is the Washington Field area. This area was one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the state of Utah. Earlier plans called for development in the Washington area to take place north of the I-15 freeway in the large basin in that area. The adoption of the Habitat Conservation Plan for the protection of the Tortoise changed that plan by eliminating development in the HCP area. This caused land in the field area south of Washington to be annexed into the city for urban development. It can no longer be considered or protected as an agricultural area. There are still some agricultural lands in the Enterprise and New Harmony areas, and some dry agricultural land in the Smith Mesa area. The General Plan would recommend maintenance of these areas as

agricultural land as long as possible. There are other small islands of agricultural land in the county, but there are no other large areas of available land still available.

There is however, a significant amount of public, state, and private land along the originally proposed Southern Corridor along the Arizona border between the Hurricane Cliffs and the Town of Apple Valley that could support agricultural development.

#### Residential Development:

There are, in Washington County, at least thirteen identifiable unincorporated communities. The policy of the county for many years has been to encourage, or require, development adjacent to existing cities and towns to promote annexation into those already incorporated areas where urban services are available. The purpose of a city or town is to provide services that cannot be developed on an individual basis. The position of the county is to not compete with these cities and towns.

Some of the thirteen unincorporated communities may well become incorporated at some point of time in the future. The policy behind the county encouraging development to take place in the incorporated communities is one that says that government closest to the people is the best form of government. Many of these unincorporated communities are approaching the point where services need to be provided that may best be provided through incorporation.

There are unincorporated communities in the county that have developed in places where water has been developed. Some of these communities may simply be a single subdivision, while others have land around them that would allow for further development.

Historically, unincorporated land has developed on large single home lots. In the future this development pattern could change in response to water and wastewater requirements.

One reason that the county entered into the Vision Dixie project was to establish conditions that should be considered when new development is proposed at some place in the county. A summary of these recommendations is found in the 2009 Resource Management Plan which is included as a part of this General Plan. Each of the existing unincorporated community plans has included a review of the Vision Dixie principles as a part of the General Plan for each specific community. Many of these principles will be easier to implement in new development rather than in development that was started many years ago.

Residential growth should be made in a natural pattern through extension of existing residential areas so as to minimize the tax burden related to providing schools, libraries, parks, highways, police and fire protection, sewage and garbage collection and other facilities and services necessary for the enjoyment of a community. Developments should be considered in terms of economic feasibility to the county, not only as to marketability of land, but in the time needed for development to take place, and whether this



development will be an asset to the county or a detriment to the county in terms of the cost of providing and maintaining the goods and services needed by the residents of the county.

Growth is associated with responsibility, and bigness does not always mean goodness. Efforts should be made toward encouraging quality development rather than quantity development. The General Plan seeks for high quality development instead of "boom to bust" growth.

#### Annexation:

The county policy on annexation is found previously in this plan. The county does not oppose annexation to existing cities and towns. When communities are located away from existing cities and towns and it is not convenient to annex, consideration should seriously be given to incorporation rather than to continue expansion of unincorporated areas.

#### New Development Areas Identified

There are a number of areas in the county that have been identified for development from time to time. Since there has been a downturn in the economy, areas that were being considered for development just a few years ago, are now lying dormant. Assuming that the economy improves in coming years, some of these areas may again be proposed for development. Among the areas where development has been proposed include land on Smith Mesa, the Dalton Wash area, the Harmony Valley, significant future development in the Dammeron Valley area, and more development in the Enterprise area of the county.

In addition to these areas where development has been proposed, the Land Bill identified several tracts of land equaling some 4,000 acres of BLM land that are expected to be sold for private development. These parcels were identified in the BLM Resource management Plan.

One large area of some 1,300 acres is proposed for sale in the city of Santa Clara, south of the Santa Clara River, and identified as the 'South Hills' area. Some of that land contains threatened and endangered plants which would reduce the available land. Another area of significant size is in the area lying between Dammeron Valley and Gunlock which could be released for sale in the future. The Land Bill did not designate any time frame for the disposal of the BLM property, so it is unlikely that any of it will be sold while the general economy is moving at a much slower rate than it was a few years ago.

#### Housing:

Presently in the unincorporated area of Washington County there are many subdivisions that have been developed and recorded. Included in these subdivisions are a total of

4615 building lots available for residential construction. Currently there are 2701 homes existing in these subdivisions. There are still some 1914 vacant lots in the unincorporated part of the county that could be built on. 41 percent of the lots in the unincorporated county are still vacant and available for construction. These figures are approximate and do not include scattered parcels around the county.

**Table V**  
**Housing in Washington County**

Number of developments studied	13
Number of building lots	4615
Number of existing dwellings	2701
Number of vacant lots	1914

Because the historic method of liquid waste disposal has been through the use of septic tanks, the size of lots in the county has been upwards of 1 acre in size. Because of the value of land, it becomes difficult to construct low and moderate income housing on these large lots, with the exception of modular units. Therefore, modular units account for most of the current low and moderate income housing in Washington County. Two things could change that situation. Through the Water District, water may become available in parts of the county where it has previously been unavailable. In addition, it is now possible to construct an on-site treatment plant for sewage disposal which would then allow for a variety of housing types similar to those currently available in the various cities in the county. The on-site plants are too expensive for a single dwelling unit, but in a larger planned development containing a variety of housing types, they become much more affordable.

#### Commercial Development:

The General Plan considers the commercial needs of the various parts of the county. Basically, commercial development is divided into two categories, the shopping center and the highway service center. Shopping centers may be further reduced to provide basic convenience goods to smaller areas. Highway service centers are for the purpose of serving the traveling public.

Shopping centers should be planned, designed and located as a part of existing community development. Many of the communities do not have any commercial development or else there is very limited commercial activity. This lack of existing services provides the opportunity to develop quality shopping facilities, determine where they should be located and where types of commercial development can locate in proximity to other businesses. Even in many of the existing communities, commercial sites could be identified using Vision Dixie principles which would, in the future, provide commercial services to the residents of the area.

The delivery of commercial business is largely dependent upon economics in deciding whether or not to locate in a particular area. However, in community planning, provision should be made for logical commercial space to be incorporated into the community. Time will take care of actual development. When it does come, it will be an integral part of the community where residents can walk to shopping facilities without the use of an automobile. This is the pattern that the General Plan recommends to be followed in new communities, and where possible to be identified in existing communities during the planning process.

The General Plan recommends against the development of communities with a "strip" of commercial land running the length of the community. This type of development will encourage marginal commercial development and speculative commercial activities, most of which will usually be unsuccessful. This type of commercial development is not generally useful to small rural communities and is better left to larger city development.

The General Plan does not attempt to limit commercial competition, but rather to direct it to areas where it can develop harmoniously into the plan for the total community. The General Plan proposes relationships where growth, progress, and service can be achieved without adversely affecting other segments of community life.

#### Industrial Development:

Industrial development continues to increase in Washington County. Some areas of the county seek industrial development, others do not. Very little industrial development exists in the unincorporated areas outside of some limited mineral development, particularly sand and gravel operations.

Industrial development normally requires a close proximity to areas where public facilities are available. Many such developments are dependent upon access to the I-15 Freeway and should not be located in areas where freeway access is not readily available.

Washington County has never sought the establishment of pollutant type industries. Strict controls and regulations should be imposed on any industry located anywhere in the county to guarantee against pollution of air, land, or water supplies.

#### Community Plans:

This section of the General Plan contains the community plans for most of the unincorporated communities in the county. Previous planning has been done in some of these communities; some have never had a community plan prepared. Plans may be developed in areas not currently listed.

Those areas that have been developed and are found in this section of the General Plan include the unincorporated areas of Brookside/Pine Valley Mt. Farms, Central/Dixie Deer Estates, Cliff Dwellers/Sky Ranch/Hurricane Cliff Estates, Dammeron Valley,

Diamond Valley, East Enterprise, Gunlock, the Kolob area, Harmony Valley, Pine Valley, Pintura/I-15 Corridor, Veyo, and Winchester Hills.

Plans for each of these areas have been developed individually community by community, and have been added to this section of the General Plan of the county as follows: